

sented the following American works for the first time in Chicago: Carpenter, *Symphony Number 2*; Koutzen, *Valley Forge*; Kreutz, "Winter of the Blue Snow," from *Paul Bunyan Suite*; Deems Taylor, *Fantasy on Two Themes*, Opus 17. Hans Lange conducted the following works by resident American composers for the first time in Chicago: Helfer, *Overture, In Modo Giocoso*; Hindemith, *Cupid and Psyche*; Saminsky, *Three Shadows*; Shulman, *Theme and Variations for Solo Viola and Orchestra*; Wald, *The Dancer Dead*; Zador, *Biblical Triptych*. In the realm of recent European music, he unearthed Honegger's *Prelude to The Tempest* and von Webern's *Passacaglia*, Opus 1; Mr. Lange programmed the two Schönberg transcriptions of Bach chorale-preludes and, with the assistance of Isaac Stern, Szymanowski's second *Violin Concerto*. Defauw also brought the music of Respighi astonishingly back into the limelight; he treated Chicago all in one season to the luxury of *The Fountains of Rome*, *The Pines of Rome*, *Church Windows* and *The Birds*.

In February the School of Design ventured to present a program of modern music, summoning Ernst Krenek from St. Paul to play his carefully celebrated *Third Sonata for Piano* and to offer comments upon such other piano works (played by Felix Witzinger) as the Stravinsky *Sonata* (welcome after many years of neglect), immature works by Ross Lee Finney (*Fantasy*) and Carlos Chavez (*Three Pieces for Piano*), and inspirations of decidedly secondary order by Milhaud (*Four Sketches*) and Bohuslav Martinu (*Esquisses de Danses*). Except for the Krenek and Stravinsky works, the program left the impression that the composers were represented by pieces which were universally sub-standard in ideas and workmanship.

Horowitz played Prokofiev's *Seventh Sonata*, and John Kirkpatrick presented his American program of the Ives *Concord Sonata*, and works of lesser pretension. And this unhappily constitutes just about the full record of all that was done for contemporary music in Chicago in the season of 1943-1944.

Cecil Smith

## THE NEW WORKS AT ROCHESTER

THE fourteenth Rochester Festival of American music given in April by the forces of the Eastman School of Music under the direction of Howard Hanson, offered six programs. The abundance of music makes it possible to speak here only of the new works heard. There were five and

I shall discuss them in the order of their occurrence.

The *Second Symphony* of William Bergsma justifies the hopes held for this sensitive young composer. The idiom is exactly right for the medium, the feeling deep and liberated. Especially fine are the poetic slow movement, with its long clear lines and nobly directed harmonies, and the strangely colored introduction to the allegro. The finale is rather consciously naive and inferior to the other three. The work was superbly played by the Gordon String Quartet.

A formidable new score is *Declaratives* (women's voices and small orchestra) by Burrill Phillips. These three settings "Bells," "Love," "Pueblos," are lithe, eager, personal, masterfully contrived. I wish there were more room for an ample discussion of them. Phillips has now reached musical manhood; he writes his own music. "Bells" has rough, vibrant timbres, a large mood. The final piece raises up the scene of an Indian ceremony with glowing fidelity; it is done in good earthy paint. "Love" achieves a poignant feeling and color. Phillips is here to stay. The work had a notable performance under Herman Genhart, and made an enormous impression.

The symphony program led by Howard Hanson on April 27th offered three premieres. Douglas Moore's *In Memoriam* is no easy work to describe or appraise. Here is a score of elevated character – sombre, touching, mordant. The culture and span of Moore's mind show in almost every bar. This work "speaks of the bitterness of youth cut down in its prime to no purpose." Shelley sang in similar strain over Keats. But Shelley's is a grand canvas, as his subject is grand and embracing. Moore was at fault, I feel, in compressing this exalted mood into a comparatively small frame. (Paradoxically, the piece seems at once too long and too short.) The form, with its double climax, is not convincing, and the music, for all its high ardor and discipline, does not quite attain incandescence. It is nevertheless a work of beauty and integrity. Fine mortuary music is rare enough in this world.

Gardner Read's *Night Flight* is a curious fusion of timbres in a single, intent mood to express the loneliness of space traversed by the Andean planes. This is an attractive experiment, showing a resourceful hand and an alert mind. It seems virtually barren of line or thematic growth; all is color. As background for a film, the score might be perfect; alone, the lack of thematic supports, girders and buttresses, results in unsteadiness. Briefly, the music is not self-sufficient and it seems, also, to

deal with externals. Yet such trials should be made. Read has grown a great deal since he applied pigments of the old, endorsed manufacture. The piece, however, can hardly be more than an isolated experiment on his part. (Remember *Pacific 231*?)

The enigmatic score of the week for me was Elliott Carter's *First Symphony*. With its avowed nature affinities – Cape Cod and cultural New England – it emerged as a work of ascetic complexion. This is no bar to splendor, truth, or poetry. Yet Carter seems hobbled by certain esthetic pressures or convictions, and by his own highly adjusted, check-reined temperament. He has the attributes of a candid artist. Only a certain native reticence holds him from bold, free expression. He will discuss everything but his secret heart. This fastidious censorship is no good thing. Carter can write a tune, but he can also surround it with a kind of esoteric tonal haze. Thus he sometimes succeeds in putting second things first. "Awake and Sing" is no bad motto for composers, especially those of Carter's modest character. Of the three movements I liked best the final rondo, with its salty rhythms and light-moving air. The first allegro – somewhat tenuous – is done with too much brush-work. The adagio, while noble in attitude, just eludes the heart. The scoring is clear, but gray rather than sunny. Yet the work shows signs of a mettlesome composer. Carter has the mien of an artist. Let him seize the orchestra with both hands.

A few other necessarily restricted observations. Jacques Gordon played Barber's lyrical *Violin Concerto* with surpassing art, and Dr. Hanson, who conducted three programs of the week with power, affection and great skill, gave his own intense and richly hued *Fourth Symphony* with the Senior Orchestra. Paul White led the Little Symphony in firm performances of Joseph Wagner, Haines, Hill and Daniels.

I have been able to describe only a few events of a festival crowded with interest. For those who can hear, there is American music.

*Bernard Rogers*

### SOME FIRSTS IN PHILADELPHIA

THE American premiere of Marc Blitzstein's *Freedom Morning* was given here by Saul Caston and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Traditional Negro themes strung together in swing style and stiffly rendered, placed an inconsequential work in the embarrassing position of facing its build-up squarely. The best writing is in the slow modal introduction but